

The President's Daily Brief

8 May 1970

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THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

[redacted] Indochinese [redacted]

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Communists continue their move westward into Cambodia. (Page 2)

Communists are keeping the corridor open in Laos. (Page 4)

The Soviet-Czechoslovak friendship treaty spells out the "Brezhnev doctrine." (Page 5)

[redacted] (Page 6)

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More trouble is expected on the Israel-Lebanon border. (Page 7)

Guatemalan [redacted]

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(Page 8)

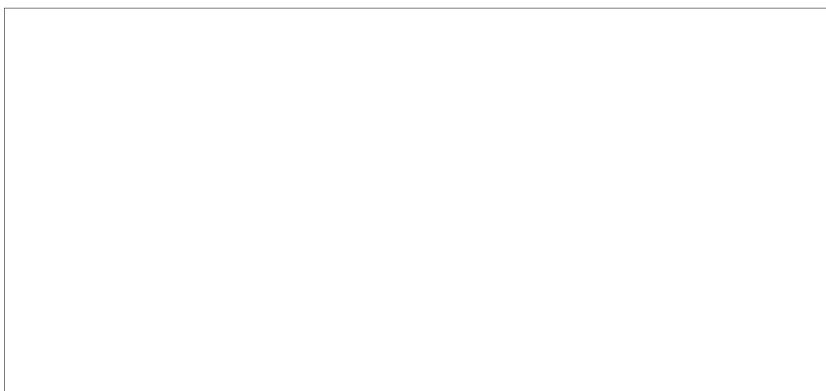
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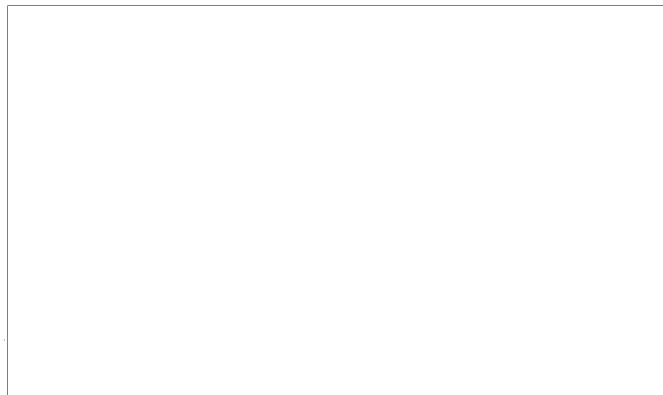
INDOCHINA



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Cambodia: Current Situation



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CAMBODIA

Yesterday's attack against Kratie may have been carried out by elements of the 275th Viet Cong Regiment previously identified as being about 15 miles from the town. If so, this would be the first confirmed use of Communist main force units in the Cambodian campaign. Recent reports from refugees from Mondolkiri Province indicated that virtually the entire province was under effective enemy domination even before the fall of its capital, Senmonorom.

The adjacent northern province of Stung Treng also may fall soon to the Communists. Intercepted army messages indicate that government troops are abandoning outposts near the Laos border and are pulling back to the town of Siem Pang. Messages state the Communists, who had established a viable insurgent force in this area even before Sihanouk's fall, are propagandizing Lao villagers near Siem Pang and are predicting attacks on Siem Pang and the provincial capital in the near future.

Although Cambodian military leaders have all but written off the northeast area, which has never been under firm government control, the loss of Kratie and Senmonorom will be a hard blow to morale in Phnom Penh. Continuing Communist inroads in the northeast and elsewhere suggest that allied operations along the South Vietnam border will not necessarily lead to an early end of Communist pressure in the interior.

Recent messages indicate that military leaders are also jumpy about a threat developing in areas west of the capital, which have been surprisingly quiet.

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The Communists have a rudimentary apparatus in the west, but it does not appear to have been very active during the past month.

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South of Phnom Penh, meanwhile, government forces still have not launched a serious drive to regain control of the west bank of the Mekong River at the Neak Luong ferry crossing. Press accounts say that government artillery is shelling the area, however. Ethnic Cambodian troops recently airlifted to Phnom Penh from South Vietnam reportedly will take part in the government's offensive in this area.

* * *

There is new evidence that the Communists are making a substantial effort to build a Communist infrastructure in Cambodian villages along the South Vietnam border.

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LAOS

Communist forces have recaptured the key artillery site overlooking Attopeu town from which they withdrew only the day before.

This action suggests that the enemy intends to maintain a foothold in the southern portion of the Bolovens Plateau. Reports from persons who escaped from Attopeu indicate that the attacking force consisted of two North Vietnamese battalions, but that the town is now being held by Pathet Lao units. The government commander responsible for the defense of Attopeu is said to have accepted an enemy offer to abandon the provincial capital without a fight.



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The Communists succeeded in moving some supplies through the Laotian panhandle during the rainy season last year [redacted]

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[redacted] Logistics units in the panhandle recently were reorganized. They have begun to improve the roads to stave off floods [redacted]

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[redacted] They are also storing up food.

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USSR-CZECHOSLOVAKIA

CIA Kremlinologists have had time to study more thoroughly the Soviet-Czechoslovak friendship treaty signed in Prague on 6 May, and have the following preliminary comments:

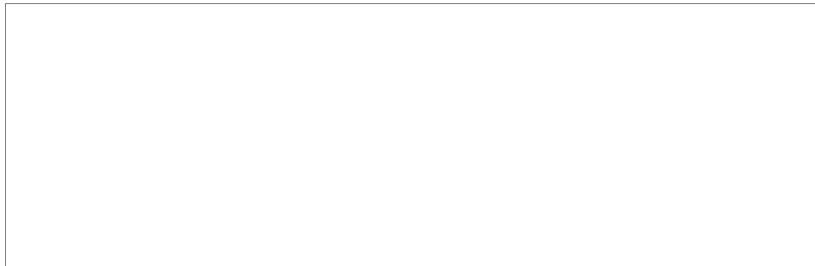
The treaty represents the fullest endorsement yet of the "Brezhnev doctrine," by which Moscow claims the right to intervene in any country where Communist rule is threatened. The signatories agree to take "the necessary measures" to protect the gains of socialism--a formulation the Soviet leaders hope will justify once and for all the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968.

The treaty also commits the two states to work towards "socialist economic integration" within CEMA, marking the first time this Soviet project has been explicitly incorporated in an agreement of this kind. In one other innovation, it obliges the Czechoslovaks to facilitate "direct ties" between the "state organs" of Prague and Moscow, which will serve to solidify the hold the Soviets now have over Czechoslovakia.

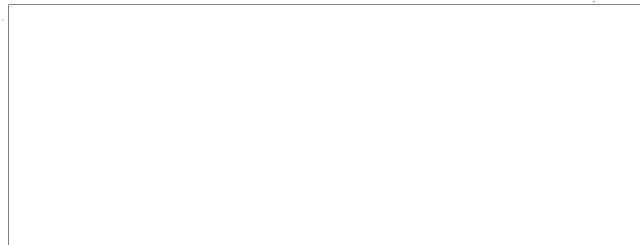
The new treaty implicitly commits Czechoslovakia to fight on the side of the USSR in any conflict with Communist China. In this respect it is similar to the treaties the USSR has with Hungary and Bulgaria. This mutual defense clause, plus the reaffirmation of the "Brezhnev doctrine," will add to the apprehensions of other East European countries over the subordination of their interests to those of Moscow.

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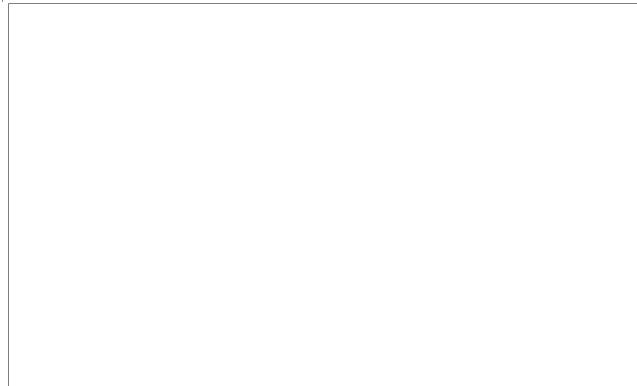
EGYPT-USSR



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ISRAEL-LEBANON

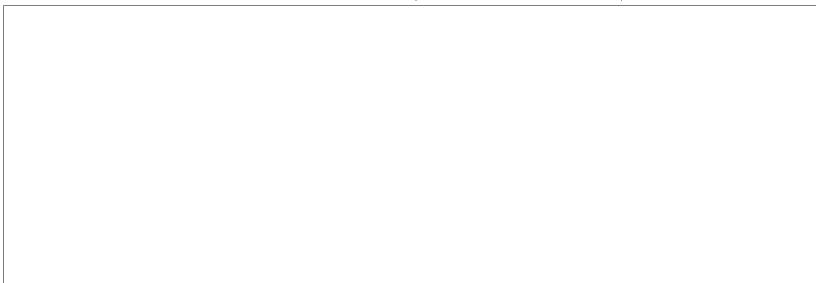
Arab guerrillas attacking across the Lebanese border seem almost certain to provoke a strong military response from Israel. Fedayeen strikes this week have killed several Israeli civilians and soldiers, and have wounded a number of others. The Israeli public is more than ordinarily wrought up over these incidents.

The nervous Beirut government has attempted to maintain some control over the guerrillas based in its territory in order to obviate Israeli countermeasures. Nevertheless, the Arab commandos have managed to carry out a steady, if not spectacular, series of attacks against Israeli settlements in this sensitive area.

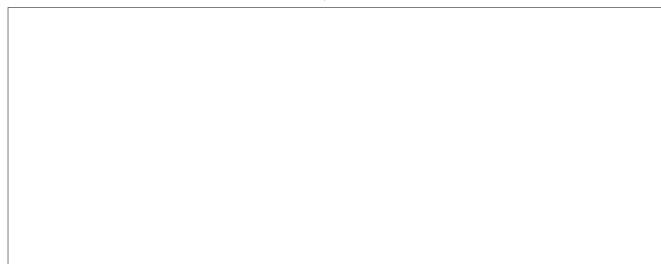
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GUATEMALA



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